

PHO 663 891

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY **DATA SHEET**
RECEIVED FEB 27 1978
DATE ENTERED JUL 12 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME * * * *water flag - system - weather*
HISTORIC Weather Service Building
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER 1923 Classen Blvd. --- NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN Oklahoma City CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT No. 5
STATE Oklahoma --- VICINITY OF Oklahoma COUNTY Oklahoma CODE 109
CODE 40

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME Home Insurance Agency, Inc.
STREET & NUMBER 1923 Classen Blvd.
CITY, TOWN Oklahoma City --- VICINITY OF Oklahoma STATE Oklahoma

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the County Clerk
STREET & NUMBER Oklahoma County Courthouse
CITY, TOWN Oklahoma City STATE Oklahoma

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE Geary Based Historical Survey
DATE 1977 --- FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Oklahoma Historical Society
CITY, TOWN Oklahoma City STATE Oklahoma

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED (basically)	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Weather service building sits atop a modest elevation on the west side of Classen Boulevard. The 100 x 150-foot site was purchased from Epworth University in 1904 for \$10.00. On it the Bureau erected a two-story brick building, over a full basement. Dimensions were 36 feet by 45 feet. Across the east front was a rather formal full-width porch with projecting center protico. Fluted columns supported the uncovered second story deck, protected by ornamental balustrade, as was the porch itself. Porch, a roof-level projected cornice running around the house, and all exterior trim was painted white.

The first floor had two halls to accommodate five rooms and a half-bath. Second floor had six rooms and a bath off a single hall. The basement had six rooms and a half-bath in addition to vault and furnace room. There was also a detached wood frame two-car garage, 18 x 20 feet, with concrete floor. Construction throughout was solid and meant to last. Walls were all brick, not brick faced. Interior woodwork was of quality pine from southeastern Oklahoma. A now unused stairway led from the second floor to the building's flat room that accommodated the bureau's weather observation instruments.

Interior changes over the years have been minimal. Although the present owner has adapted the space available to best meet the needs of his business, he is appreciative of the building's past and dedicated to preserving its historic values. Under a layer of government green paint he has discovered fine graining in the woodwork, and is in the process of restoring it. Outside he plans no structural changes, wanting merely to restore shrubs and add a protective fence in keeping with building's still handsome classic style.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW					
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT			
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1904 - 1956

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Perhaps no one under 50 can fully appreciate the special significance of the two-story, red brick house being nominated here for the National Register - the "old" United States Weather Bureau building. For in a quite literal sense television today has given "the weather" an entirely new face.

A half-century ago in a city like Oklahoma City the Weather Bureau was usually a single civil servant and "the weather" was his daily report and forecast as duly noted in the local newspaper ... along with whatever art work the editor demanded and advertising revenues justified. Today that single newspaper "face" has lost its pre-eminence, having been pushed aside by a proliferation of television stations, each with its own weatherman or weathermen (and, indeed, weatherpersons) and their assorted electronic gear, satellite print-outs, animated props, and general show business know-how.

Before television, then, the weather tended to have but one face, not many. It was the newspaper picture. And, in Oklahoma City that picture was almost sure to include the brick "Weather Service" at 1923 Classen Boulevard (a handsome building on a terrace overlooking a busy thoroughfare) and/or the figure of J. P. Slaughter or Harry F. Walgren. Each was a personality, rather than a faceless bureaucrat. Each headed the Oklahoma City office for many years. Each was always willing to grant an interview or go along with whatever gag photo the reporter might think up (holding a hand out the window to see if it was raining or walking with an umbrella on a bright and sunny day predicted for rainfall). The "Weather Service" building was indeed a long-familiar part of the Oklahoma City scene.

* * *

The Weather Service site is in the NE quarter of section 29 (Township 12 North, Range 3 West, I. M.) and was opened to settlement in the run of 1889. After changing hands several times the east half of the quarter was purchased on Jan. 17, 1901, for \$5,000, by Charles F. Colcord and F. B. Ziegler. The two early-day civic leaders filed a plat for the Colcord & Ziegler Addition on February 16. On May 21, 1902, both men joined Anton H. Classen, Margaret McKinley, and John W. Shartel to form the University Development Company, incorporated for \$200,000. The company filed a plat for the University Addition on June 16 and 52 acres of the addition were promptly sold for \$1.00 to the newly organized Epworth University Corporation. The school (present Oklahoma City University) opened on Sept. 10, 1904. But six months earlier, on March 9, Epworth had sold to the Secretary of the Agriculture (for \$10.00) a 150 x 100-foot site in the northeast corner of the campus-to-be ... "to be used solely for Weather Bureau purposes." In the event the Weather Bureau moved to another location the site was to be returned to Epworth with all "the appurtenances thereunto belonging . . ."

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Miscellaneous materials supplied by the Home Insurance Agency and Oklahoma City University, both of Oklahoma City, and taken from the library files of the Oklahoma Publishing Company, publisher of the Daily Oklahoman and Oklahoma City Times.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	14	633220	3928180	173	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C					D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

DATE

December 1977

TELEPHONE

405/884-5456

STATE

Oklahoma

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Harry L. Deupree Jr.

DATE

6-29-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Charles Adams*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE: 7/12/78

DATE: 7-10-78

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Oklahoma	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

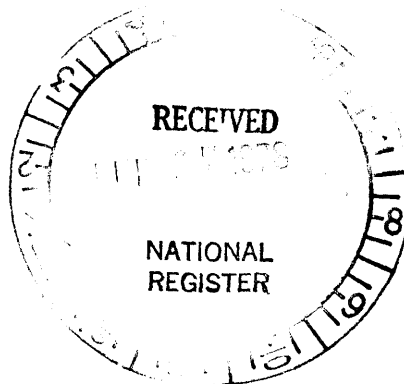
(Number all entries)

No. 8 Significance

Page 1

Weather Bureau Building

The government did indeed move, in 1956, and the property was reclaimed by OCU. It was sold in 1958 and operated for a number of years as a business school. The present owners purchased the property in 1971, using it as headquarters for their insurance agency. Although the interior has been adapted somewhat for business purposes, the exterior remains unchanged - the long-time "face" of Oklahoma City's U. S. Weather Bureau.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUL 12 1978

(Number all entries)

Weather Service Building

No. 8. Significance

(Addendum: June 1978)

It will be noted that, in response to your comments, we are deleting the "Science" designation as an Area of Significance and designating instead "Social/Humanitarian." This should have been done to begin with as it conforms much more closely to the gist of our brief - that the Weather Service Building itself, largely because of the long tenure of two of its chiefs, was an important, recognizable feature of day to day life in Oklahoma City and much of Central Oklahoma for half a century.

The red brick Weather Service Building was in use from 1904 to 1956. J. P. Slaughter was chief from 1905 to 1932, when he died only a short time before his retirement. Harry F. Walgren took over from him and served as chief until his retirement in 1943. The two men - both, as noted before, were distinct personalities, their names quickly recognized by most area residents - thus tended to personify Oklahoma "weather" for 38 of the 52 years the service operated from atop the low ridge at 1923 Classen.

It should perhaps also be added for the benefit of those who have never lived on the Great Plains that weather here is not just a convenient conversational ploy. Weather has always been and continues to be a topic of day-to-day interest and concern. In a very real sense it is a matter of economic life and death. This was particularly true in the "Dirty Thirties," the decade of the tragic Dust Bowl when prolonged drought profoundly changed the face and indeed the entire lifestyle of vast sections of the Southern Plains. Mr. Slaughter and then Mr. Walgren WERE the Oklahoma weather service during this difficult period.

